231
173 [91] Legendary tradition attributes to Nyiraruchyaba, daughter of Gihanga, the introduction of cattle into Ruanda. One day when she went to cut wood, she noticed whitish patches on the ground. Being very thirsty and not finding any water nearby, she took her drinking-straw and drank the white liquid. Finding this drink delicious, she wished to know whence it came. She went into the forest and came upon a horned animal that was losing through its udder a liquid identical to that she had just drunk. In the meantime as Gihanga had fallen seriously ill, she brought him some of the white liquid. The patient drank it and recovered quickly. He asked his daughter where the medicine had come from and she brought him the animal. The cow was called ingizi (from kugira neza, to heal well). Since that time the Banyarwanda have had a great veneration for horned cattle.

● 232 Along with ordinary cattle (inkuku) the Mwami owns herds of scrupulously selected cows which, without being precisely the object of a cult as in ancient Egypt, are treated with particular care and are in the foreground at all festivals. These are the Inyambo (1).

1. The word Inyambo designates an animal, a herd, or all the herds together.

The origin of the Inyambo goes back to the Mwami Yuhi Mazimpaka. This king chose fine long-legged cows with long horns and a shiny dark brown coat (ibihogo) and mated them with a young and vigorous bull. The selected herd was kept apart in the province of Rukoma near the Nyabarongo River. These cows multiplied and from them the best ones continually selected. Under the preceding Mwami, Yuhi Musinga, the Inyambo were divided into two herds, one called agakanda and the other indoha. Musinga [92] added a third and called them respectively Inyuba hilo (the ones to be respected) or herd of Gihanga; Inshya (the new ones) or herd of Kigeri Ndabarasa which contained a remarkable bull called Rushya; and finally Ingabe (the dominating ones) or herd of Kigeri Rwabugiri.

The three herds combined were called Insanga. At the full moon in June they were led in procession to the Mwami amidst dancing and joyful cries (gukura gichurasi, lit., to carry off the month of May) (1).

821 1. The month of May, during which according to tradition Mwami Gihanga died.

821 was considered a time of mourning. It was forbidden to get married at that time.

232 At all times a bull called Rusanga and five cows of each of the three Insanga herds were kept in a special enclosure inside Musinga's boma, and the king would often come and stroke them and speak to them affectionately.

The Inyambo now live in the province of Buganza, a country of fine pastures and gently undulating hills; being delicate animals they cannot stand the high altitude climate. The Mwami hands over his herds to the umutware w'intebe who in turn entrusts them to a hill chief or to the common Batutsi, although without position of authority, they are of nobler origin than some chiefs and are therefore particularly qualified to care for this choice cattle.

The Inyambo are large, long-legged animals with a less well developed dewlap than ordinary cattle, a deeper chest, long flanks, and an angular, thin, and dry rump. The enormously long horns often attain a length of 1.75 meters. They are in the shape of a lyre or crescent; the width between the tips may be 2 or more meters. [93] The coat is bright russet (igaju) or cheese-colored (igitare), but mostly dark brown (ibihogo).

The Inyambo go back into the kraal every evening and are always bedded down, which is rarely done for ordinary cattle, even by wealthy owners.

234 They are not milked like ordinary cows. Only sufficient milk for their Bahutu guardians is taken daily. If they have a calf, their milk is reserved for the young animal. The offspring of the Inyambo is automatically an inyambo. Even the offspring of ordinary cows may become inyambo.

232 If in a herd of inkuku there is a heifer whose characteristics are similar to those of the Inyambo, the Banyarwanda mate this heifer with an inyambo bull. The calf born of this first union is called imilizo. If the breeders judge that the inyambo qualities are to be found in this animal, it is also mated with an inyambo bull, and the offspring is considered worthy to enter the Inyambo herd.

The inyambo cows are never slaughtered or sold for any reason, such as malformation or sterility; they all die of illness or old age. The males fare differently. When they are full grown

232 the best are kept for reproduction, but the others are sold, killed, or placed in ordinary herds. The meat of slaughtered bulls and that of dead cows is eaten or sold by the guardians.

Castration does not exist; it is even forbidden by customary law.

527 231 The Inyambo are led to the Mwami at festival time and at public rejoicings. They are escorted by the Mututsi, with whom they are boarded, and by [94] their guardians. For the occasion, the finest animal (inyamibwa) wears on its forehead an ornament of beads (amaraba), at the base of each of its horns three strings of beads (amashyongoshyo), and on the tips, tufts of banana fiber (amakamba); a strap covered with black and red beads goes round its neck; finally tufts of palm fiber called ubuhivu are fastened to the end of its tail. Six cows wear an ornament of white beads (inigi) between their horns and necks. Two others have two inigi and a bead collar longer than the inigi called imiheja. Finally the rest of the Inyambo simply have a tuft of fibers on their tails.

When they arrive at Nyanza, the Inyambo file before the Mwami while their escorts utter joyful cries (urwamu), wave sticks (guchyar'inka, lit., to make the cattle go in), and praise the good qualities of the Inyambo. Then they line the Inyambo up (kumulika Inyambo, lit., to show off the Inyambo) and renew their praises.

The intore pages then group themselves and dance in front of the herd (kwinikiza). The festival ends with libations of banana beer offered by the Mwami to all who have participated in the presentation of the Inyambo. If the Mwami is satisfied with the treatment of the Inyambo, he gives some ingororano to the chief of the province in which the herd is living and also to the chief's people.

8. Death of the King

643 763 When the Mwami feels his end is approaching, he calls to his side his stewards (abanyagikari), notables (abatoni) of whom he is particularly fond, and some guardians of the customs (abiru). He tells them his last wishes and reminds them of the name of the successor he has chosen. [95]

233 surviving animals for a long time to come, until the herds once more have become too large, the animals once more cannot find enough to eat, and natural selection by epidemics starts once again. This situation will not improve until Europeans introduce national methods of stock breeding.

The animals are conscientiously cared for every day. Every night fresh litter is provided in the pens for the herds returning from the pasture. The animals are scrubbed clean with straw whisks and searched for ticks and other parasites which may have attached themselves to the animals. The udders are washed each time after milking. While the cattle are standing in the kraals or drinking from the troughs, they are bothered by stinging flies; human beings, too, are attacked by these bloodthirsty tormentors. For this reason fires are kept burning in the kraals and near the watering places, the smoke driving away the flies. Such pillars of smoke can be seen rising from the farms everywhere in the morning and evening. From time to time the animals are given saliferous ashes to lick. Even in the pastures the herdsman is constantly occupied with his herd. He is able to give it all kinds of orders by shrill whistling. As a result of good treatment, the animals are in most cases very good-natured; they do not kick, and they keep still when something is being done to them. In the latter case one of the herdsmen usually uses his stick or reed to stroke the animal gently between the upper part of the hind legs. Despite their long horns, the animals also cause much less damage among themselves than one might expect. Even if they are crowded together when driven to or from the pasture, a constant muffled rattling and clanking of the colliding horns can be heard -- the characteristic sound of a moving Urundi herd -- but it is extremely seldom that the animals injure each
● 232 other. In case an animal is seriously injured or becomes sick and the owner himself is unable to help which, however, he is usually able to do -- a Mutussi or Muhutu who is skilled in medicine is called to act as a veterinarian. For his help he
232 is paid very well (Plate 25a). The Batussi, like all Africans,
731 are quite powerless against epidemics, especially rinderpest,

232 and as a result the devastations caused among the cattle by a
731 single epidemic are terrible. Thus, the rinderpest that ravaged the entire interlacustrine region, as well as Uganda and Unjoro, in 1888 killed two thirds of all the cattle, and since the Bahima live mainly on milk, blood, and meat, it is reported that almost two thirds of the Bahima also died of hunger (No. 17, Vol. II, p. 626).

Although the Barundi take good care of their cattle, they
232 cannot really be called good cattle breeders, as is sometimes done. The same is true for the Banjaruanda. The livestock suffers from an insufficient supply of new blood, that is, from the centuries-old inbreeding. It is true that the Barundi, as well as the Banjaruanda, always select the breeding steers from a different herd in order to prevent degeneration, but there is still only variation within the same long-horned strain of cattle [44] and the blood is not freshened up by other breeds. Since also most of the bulls are not castrated, although castration is known and a special term exists for it (kuschahura), there are often weak bulls in the herds which cause the breed to deteriorate. The improvement of the breeds is not helped either by the fact that, as a result of the growing demand for cattle hides by traders, more bulls are raised which in former times used to be slaughtered or sacrificed when they were still young. Degeneration is especially apparent from the fact that there are a great number of sterile cows, both in Urundi and Ruanda. They can be immediately recognized in a herd since they have the longest horns. It almost appears as if the excess of strength which has not been spent on reproduction is channeled into making the horns grow to a gigantic size. Both in Urundi and Ruanda only the herds of the kings and of the high batwale are in really good condition as a result of constant selection and exchange. There are white, brown, and dappled herds. However, these are deluxe herds and not representative of the general run.
232 The designation, "holy cattle," which is often heard applied
778 to the king's herds, is as incorrect as it is when applied to the herds of the Musinga [king] of Ruanda. It is also erroneous in that not even the animals destined for sacrifice are taken from these herds. On the other hand there are holy cattle kept

232 especially for sacrifice and for their function at the election
778 of the king, and there are others dedicated to one of the principal gods, Imana, Riangombe, Rikiranga (see p. 68, also p. 184 of original text [not translated]).

When a calf is born, it is rubbed with butter. As soon
233 as the horns appear, the owner tears off the covering epidermis with his teeth and rubs the little horns with butter so as to make them grow well. The calf is then given a name which is de-
[552] termined by its parentage, color, or some other characteristic, or in memory of some deceased member of the family, a chief, king, etc. The calves are put in the pen for six months before being sent to pasture, and after that the young cattle graze in a separate pasture. In the morning and in the evening, before the milking of the cows, the calves are permitted to suck. If a cow refuses to suckle her calf, both her udder and the calf are rubbed with salt water, whereupon the cow will lick the calf and will also allow it to lick and to suck her udder. In order to wean a calf, the cow's teats are smeared with cow dung (No. 19, p. 423).

234 Before a cow is milked (kukamma), the calf is permitted to suck for a few moments. Then the Murundi squats down near the udder, holding a vessel under it with his left hand and milking with his right hand. In this process a considerable amount of milk (amata) is spilled on the ground since the vessel has a narrow opening. An unruly cow or one that kicks has her legs tied together while being milked. If the calf dies or is slaughtered, the cow gives no more milk. In this case, to make her continue to produce milk, the skin of her calf stuffed with straw or simply a piece of the hide suspended on a stick is held in front of her nose (No. 22, p. 287; No. 48, p. 141; No. 27, p. 95). This is also true in Ruanda, Ankole, and the other Bahima regions. This artless yet useful deception usually tricks the cows, and they lick the hide and continue to give milk. The amount of milk produced by the long-horned cattle is quite small all over the interlacustrine region. It is seldom more than two to three liters daily, in
234 the morning and in the evening. The milk pails (itschjansi)
415 are always made of wood; in most cases they have a cylindrical shape and a rounded lid. Van der Burgt claims that [45] this

234 [142] While the cow is being milked, a fire of cow dung is kept burning beside her. The smoke keeps off the troublesome stable flies, and the animals can stand quietly.

Young calves are kept in special small huts or in closed-off portions of the entrance room of the dwellings (umuliango).

415 The milk is stored in cylindrical vessels (kianzi) crudely carved out of wood. The vessels are washed with cow urine, and from time to time they are fumigated. A cone-shaped lid 272 is made from a bundle of straw sewed to form a spiral. The milk is drunk chiefly when it is curdled (kivugutu); it is beaten with a small stick to change this consistency. Fresh milk (amata) and buttermilk (amachunde) are also drunk.

[413]

Fig. 33. Arrow for Bloodletting, Ruanda. (1/6 actual size. III E 13744. 58 1/2 centimeters long.)

Besides milk, the blood of cattle is also drunk. For this purpose the bulls are bled from time to time by shooting a special arrow into the neck vein at close range. The short iron tip of the arrow is set into a wooden shaft. The upper part of the shaft is bound, to prevent the wood from splitting and also to prevent the arrow from penetrating too deeply into the vein. The lower end of the arrow has a notch into which the bowstring fits. When the blood is drawn off, a tourniquet of rope is tied around the neck below the wound.

The blood is drunk either fresh or cooked. It is sometimes [846] also mixed with milk, and in this form it is given to women after childbirth "to replace the lost blood."

232 Bloodletting is also practiced on sick animals by specialists. It is said that the animals are given the drawn blood as a reward.

262 Meat is eaten only on special occasions. Beef cattle have a very great value, and beef, therefore, is regarded as the greatest delicacy.

231 In the herdsman aristocracy of Ruanda the Muhutu must always yield to the cow. Cows have crowded out the Bahutu in certain parts of Ufumbiro, and they definitely eliminated the farmers from Mulera's lava plain. They depopulated the region around Nyanza. We can say, therefore, that cows are a powerful factor in shaping the landscape of Ruanda.

231 Transactions involving the cow play a very important part
43] in economic life and judicial practices in Ruanda. These transactions take many forms.

[144] There is the simple sale where the price is paid at once or in installments (in goats). I also learned of another type of sale. The owner of two young bulls exchanges them for the unborn calf of a certain cow. If the calf is born a male, they wait for the next one. This transaction is known as kwatiriza. In kwatiriza, the milk, after the first two months during which the herdsman gets it, is divided between the buyer of the calf and the owner of the cow. However, there are often arrangements whereby half or even all the milk is simply bought up by someone.

Cows are for sale only in Mulera where they belong to Bahutu. Batutsi sell only young bulls. Calving cows are under no circumstances disposed of; they are only granted in feudal tenure. Even large bulls (mfizi) are not sold. I was repeatedly told that they cannot even be granted.

231 Goats are raised everywhere by the Bahutu. In the northwest sheep are raised in large numbers. I was presented with my first sheep on the route between Nyanza and Mulera, at the Nyawarongo ferry. One sees individual sheep everywhere. They are used for sacrificial purposes.

●232 In this discussion of animal husbandry we must say a word about castration. This operation is familiar to the people of Ruanda and is performed chiefly on goats. It is said that the castration of cattle is forbidden by the king, but it is rumored that the cows one is forced to return are secretly cauterized in revenge. Hunting dogs are also castrated. It is said, too, that enemies of
[304] the king are castrated.

224 Hunting. Hunting as the chief means of obtaining food is practiced only by the Batwa. They live on the yield of the hunt,

791 Soothsayers, Sorcerers, and Medicine Men. Besides the
789 babandwa, there are several categories of people in Mulem who know how to exercise power over the living and over spirits in supernatural ways. We shall speak here of bapfumu, bahuzi, balozi, bachunyi, bahinza, and bawubyi.

[319] Bapfumu have the task of communicating with the spirits of the dead (bazimu). They are visited when a death has occurred in the family, and a present of food, sometimes even a goat, is brought to them. They then tell the family where it would be most suitable to build the spirit hut of the deceased (ndaro). Since the mupfumu remains in contact with the spirits of the dead and since these spirits cause illness, he is asked whether a sick person will recover. The mupfumu gives answers with the help of the little board oracle.

The special duty of the bahuzi is to discover poisoners who are known here as balozi and in the Runyoro territory was balogu. If many deaths occur, poisoning is immediately suspected. The muhuzi is summoned to handle this, and it is his task to determine
[682] who the poisoner is. If discovered, the criminal can be killed, and the evil can, at least for the future, be remedied. The muhuzi goes from one compound to another with his enchanted antelope horn. Everywhere he is most hospitably received by the head of the family who gives him gifts. All are afraid that if he were displeased he might point to them as poisoners, and this always means death. On his rounds the muhuzi is told by the horn where the poison is to be found and who the poisoner is.

791 Persons struck by lightning are also treated by the muhuzi.
821 If lightning strikes a herd of cattle, the owner utters a cry of joy
● 232 which consists of a long drawn-out "hoo..." as he strikes his lips with his hand. This call is supplemented by the news that the king is taking back his cattle. This is done in order to save the animals that have been stunned. The maganga huzi is then fetched and tries to heal the animals with herbs. For his efforts he is presented with the jaws of the dead animals and the meat on them. The horns of the dead animals are buried at the spot where they
[687] were stricken. Another task of the bahuzi is to prophesy to the sick the outcome of their illness.